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Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee

(VAAC) Wednesday, April 19, 2023, 1:30 p.m.

Meeting Minutes

1. Welcome, Call to Order, Roll Call, and Declaration of Quorum

VAAC members present:

- Fred Nisen
- Jan Bell
- Mary Helen Gallegos
- Larry Smith
- Maria Coronel
- Veronica Elsea
- Dianne Russell

Members of SOS

- Debra Ledsinger – OVSTA
- Adam Quintana – VCA
- Anakaren Monroy – Legislative Unit
- Susan Lapsley

Members of the public:

- Tricia Webber – Santa Cruz
- Adam McDonald
- Karie Lewis – Disability Rights CA

There was no quorum at the beginning of the meeting. Quorum was met at 1:55 p.m.

2. VAAC Members Community Outreach Updates

- Fred Nisen had no updates beyond what is already listed on the agenda.
- Jan Bell also had no updates beyond what is already listed on the agenda.
- Mary Helen Gallegos said her office is active in outreach, helping community members understand the process of the presidential primaries, voter registration, and what resources are available for voters

with disabilities.

- Veronica Elsea had no updates.
- Dianne Russell had no updates.
- Maria Coronel said that recent outreach efforts in Yolo included a county-wide high school voter registration drive and that they are in the process of preparing for the May 2nd City of Davis special election. They are also scheduling the dates for further work on renewing the county's Election Administration Plan (EAP).

3. SOS Updates

- Office of Voting Systems Technology Assessment (OVSTA)
 - Debra Ledsinger from OVSTA updated the VAAC on current testing. These voting systems are currently at the following positions in the process:
 - ES&S Version 6.3.0.2 - Post-testing
 - Dominion Suite 5.17-A - Application Review
 - Robis Elections Inc. AskED Version 3.4 - Withdrawn
 - ES&S Version 6.5.0.2 - Application Review
 - Hart Verity Voting 3.2 – Testing
 - KNOWiNK Poll Pad 3 Version 3.4 – Application Review
 - KNOWiNK Poll Print Version 3.4 – Application Review
 - Tenex Precinct Central Touchpad Version 6 – Application Review
 - Runbeck Sentio Lite EVS and SPS 9.3 – Post-Testing
- Voter's Choice Act (VCA)
 - Adam Quintana updated the VAAC on the development of county EAPs for the twenty-four counties using the VCA model. SOS is currently assisting these counties on completing their EAPs. SOS is also focused on encouraging counties to work with disabled communities on accessibility issues. One problem that counties are having is recruiting local VAAC members. SOS is assisting counties with this issue by sharing best practices on how to encourage local participation on county VAACs.
 - Fred Nisen asked about the number of counties that are working on becoming VCA counties. There are currently three counties that look like they will be able to make the transition this year. Fred Nisen asked if the VAAC can be given information about those counties so that Disability Rights CA and other organizations can offer assistance to them in their transition to the VCA model, but Adam Quintana is not currently cleared yet to name those counties and provide the contact information. Jana Lean, Chief of SOS Elections, stated that Elections and

Adam Quintana will work together to get that information out soon.

- Legislation
 - There were no updates from the legislative team.

4. VAAC Working Groups

- Resource Tool for Voting Machines
 - Veronica Elsea shared that the group is preparing ideal responses to the questions that they had developed in the resource toolkit. They are hoping to bring this document forward to the VAAC for a vote soon on recommending that SOS send the toolkit to the counties.
- Petitions/Signature Verification
 - Veronica Elsea's group has prepared questions for SOS regarding how accessible the current petition process is for disabled voters, including those who wish to offer their signatures for a petition and those who are collecting signatures or managing petition campaigns. Veronica Elsea asked the VAAC for a vote on sending these questions to SOS for their review and response.
 - A motion by Veronica Elsea was put forward for a vote on presenting these questions to SOS, second by Dianne Russell.
 - Motion was unanimously approved 7-0.
- County Local VAACs
 - Jan Bell updated that SOS has decided to post all of the information for local county VAACs on the SOS website, and it should be going up on the site next week.
- VAAC Toolkit
 - Dianne Russell reported that the toolkit was reviewed by VAAC members and feedback has been integrated into the toolkit.
 - A motion by Dianne Russell was put forward to vote on presenting the toolkit to SOS for review, second by Larry Smith.
 - Motion was unanimously approved 7-0.
- Deaf or Hard of Hearing
 - Mary Helen Gallegos said the group wants SOS to present a

letter to all political parties to ask them to make videos which would make their statements of purpose accessible to the Deaf or Hard of Hearing community.

- Fred Nisen asked about how these video statements will be made (would the political parties do it or SOS?). Jan Bell clarified that the political parties will be making the videos and that SOS will handle the proofing of the videos and their language prior to being posted on the SOS website.
- A motion by Mary Helen Gallegos was put forward to vote on presenting this letter for political parties to the SOS for review, second by Veronica Elsea.
- Motion was unanimously approved 7-0.

5. Shasta County Voting System

- Fred Nisen updated on the decision of the Shasta County Board of Supervisors to end their contract with Dominion Voting Systems. They decided recently not to sign a contract with another voting systems service. This means that there will be a hand-count of ballots in the next election and possibly no accessibility services available to voters with disabilities. Disability Rights CA and other organizations have reached out to the county to encourage them to seek out a new voting system for future elections. SOS has also sent a letter to Shasta through the CA Department of Justice to explain the county's responsibilities regarding voter accessibility services.
- Susan Lapsley from OVSTA added that the Shasta Board of Supervisors did vote to sign a contract with a voting systems service in order to ensure that State accessibility and remote access vote-by-mail requirements are met, but a contract has yet to be signed. OVSTA is also working on drafting the requirements needed to advise Shasta on how to conduct their hand-counting process.

6. Mobile Vote Centers

- Tricia Webber from Santa Cruz County presented on the county's Mobile Vote Center, which is a vehicle that allows a voter after E-29 to cast a ballot through the mobile service. They visit two locations each day during the voting period, and they update the locations regularly on their website. They attempt to visit each community in the county at least four times. This has been a very useful resource, including during emergencies and for other county outreach campaigns. The Mobile Vote Center has a ballot printer, has pre-printed ballots for each precinct, a drop slot for ballots, as well as an external ballot box.

- Dianne Russell asked about the accessibility features of the Mobile Vote Center and the training of the staff. Tricia Webber responded that they do make considerations about the vehicle's location and the vehicle has an accessible counter for voters.
- Andrew McDonald asked how many ballot counters they have on the center and whether they use Dominion. Tricia Webber responded that they have two and that they do use Dominion.

7. November 2022 General Election Issues

- Fred Nisen commented on the issue of poll workers being trained to advise voters on using the ballot marking device correctly. He also mentioned how Disability Rights CA gave out awards after the last election to county election officials who offered outstanding service to disabled communities.
- Veronica Elsea commented that remote access vote-by-mail (RAVBM) needs to be improved across counties and across brands, since there are inconsistencies in the level of service provided to voters with accessibility issues. She also commented that a number of blind voters may be inattentive towards their print mail, and that the VAAC should keep this in mind when considering their outreach efforts and getting people's attention about upcoming elections.

8. Public Comments and Future Agenda Items

- Veronica Elsea stated her hopes that there will be upcoming updates from the voting machines resource group.
- Susan Lapsley asked that the VAAC review and offer a response regarding a document which SOS will be sending out to counties to provide information to poll workers on assisting voters with disabilities. There is another document as well which has been used to provide guidance on emergency ballots and Susan Lapsley would like the VAAC to review that too. Same goes for a third document on FAQs regarding RAVBM. A discussion then took place about possibly creating a working group to complete these tasks.

9. Adjournment